

THE LORD'S SUPPER—SIMPLE BUT SUBLIME!

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*“This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,
ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.”
1 Corinthians 11:25-26*

[Mr. Spurgeon preached many times upon these and the preceding verses.

The following sermons have already been published:

#2, The Remembrance of Christ; #2307, The Greatest Exhibition of The Age
#2595, What The Lord's Supper Sees and Says; #2638, The Right Observance of The Lord's Supper
#2872, The Lord's Supper; #3099, The Double Forget-Me-Not and #3130, In Remembrance]

IT would be a waste of time and would tend to mar our fellowship with Christ, were I to attempt an enumeration of the errors and misapprehensions into which men have fallen concerning the object of the Lord's supper. There are some communities of men among us—and they seem to be multiplying—who turn the communion table into an altar and convert the bread and wine, which are but a memorial, into the semblance of a sacrifice.

I will only say, into their secret may we never enter, and with their confederacy may we never be united, for their table is the table of idolatry, and their altar is little better than a sacrifice unto devils. Such offerings cannot be acceptable unto God, for those who observe them turn aside altogether from the simplicity of the truth unto the cabalistic devices of Antichrist.

This simple feast of the Lord's supper, consisting of the breaking and eating of bread, and the pouring forth and drinking of wine, has two objects upon its very surface. It is intended *as a memorial of Christ*, and it is intended *as a showing or a manifestation of our faith in Christ, and of Christ's death, to others*. These are the two objects, “This do ye in remembrance of me”—and “Thus ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.”

I. First, then, WE VIEW THE SUPPER OF OUR LORD AS BEING A MEMORIAL OF HIM. And as such, *it is simple and very significant*.

How plainly it sets forth Christ's incarnation. We take the bread. That bread, upon which we feed and which becomes assimilated with our flesh, is the type of the incarnation of the Savior, who veiled His glory in our human clay. The same bread broken becomes the type of that body of the Savior rent and torn with anguish. We have there the nails, the scourge, the cross—all set forth by that simple act of breaking the bread.

And when the wine is poured out, there is no mystification, but rather the disclosure of a mystery. It represents the blood of Him who took blood in order that He might become one blood with us, His incarnate people, and who, “being found in fashion as a man,” “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

So that, just as the wine is pressed from the cluster and is poured forth into the cup, so was His blood pressed from Him in the winepress of divine wrath and poured forth that He might make atonement for the sin of men. A child, standing by the communion table, and asking the question of his father, “What meanest thou by this ordinance?” might very soon be told, “My child, we break this bread to show how

Jesus Christ's body suffered. And we pour out this wine in token that Jesus Christ poured forth his heart's blood for the sins of men."

It is marvelous that men should have added so many things of their own invention to screen and veil this very simple, and therefore, very sublime ordinance. Brethren, let us come to those two symbols and here discern Christ's body broken for our sin and view His blood streaming forth for our redemption.

The type, however, is suggestive because it not only sets forth the suffering of Christ, but also the result of that suffering. It pictures the end as well as the means. That is to say, when I take that bread and eat it, and take that cup and drink from it, I bring to remembrance—to my own remembrance and the remembrance of those round about me—not merely the fact that Christ suffered, but that He suffered for me and that I had an interest in Him.

Believe me, beloved, this truth is so simple, that while I speak, I can half fancy some of you saying, "Why does he not tell us something new?" But let me say to you, it is always a new truth and there is no truth which the Christian heart more readily forgets. Oh, that I could always feel that He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*! I know He did—it is long since I had a doubt about it—but I do not always remember it.

Going abroad into the world, how apt we are to let the remembrance of the Savior's love slip! The love of wife and husband follows us like our own shadow. The love of our dear child seems to encompass us like the atmosphere in which we live. But Jesus Christ is not visibly here and therefore the remembrance of Him requires spirituality of mind—and we are carnal—too often but babes in grace, and so we forget His sufferings.

And worse still, we forget our interest in them. Oh, that I could have the cross painted on my eyeballs, that I could not see anything except through the medium of my Savior's passion! O Jesus, set Yourself as a seal upon my hand, and as a signet on my arm, and let me wear the pledge forever where it is conspicuous before my soul's eye! Happy is that Christian who can say, "I scarcely need that memorial." But I am not such a one and I fear, my brethren, that the most of us need to be reminded by that bread and wine that Jesus died—and need to be reminded, by the eating and drinking of the same, that He died *for us*.

I do not want to say a word tonight that shall have any oratory in it—any elocutionary display about it. I want to speak so plainly, that those of you who are not Christians will say that it was a dry and dull sermon. I shall not care what you say, and what you feel, if I can get each believer here to just think over this thought and to remember it, "The Lord of glory loved *me* and gave Himself *for me*. That head which now is crowned with glory was once crowned with thorns—and crowned with thorns *for me*. He whom all heaven adores, who sits upon the loftiest throne in heaven, once did hang upon the cross, in agony extreme, for me—*for me*."

I know you are apt to think that He died for so many that He had not a special end to serve in redeeming you, but it has been very beautifully said that, as the love of Christ is infinite, if you divide the infinite by any number you please, (I do not care what the divisor is, whether it is ten, or whether it is twenty million) the quotient is infinite, and so, if the love of Jesus Christ, infinite as it is, can be supposed to be divided among us, we should each one of us have an infinite love. It is our arithmetic that teaches us this, but oh, if we do but know by experience the infinite depth, the wonderful abyss of the love of Jesus to each one of us, our souls will be comforted and rejoice with joy unspeakable. The sign, then, is significant.

But in the next place, it is worthy of notice that *the memorial which we are about to celebrate tonight is a joint one*. There is something painful, but pleasing, when the father dies, for the children to come together at the funeral and to go together to his grave. Many family heartburnings have been healed when the various members of the family have joined in a memorial to their father.

The poor man's grave, especially, has much charm in it to me. There come the sons and daughters, and pool together their shillings to buy the grave and to buy the coffin. Often, over the rich men's grave, there is a squabble as to who shall share his wealth—but there is not any such quarrel in this case. The

man has died penniless, and John, and Mary, and Thomas, all come—and they all see who can do the most in providing their patriarch's grave. And if there be a tombstone, it is not one that pays for it, but they all put their money together, so that Father's memorial may be shared by them all. How I like that thought!

So in this ordinance, “we being many are one bread,” and we being many are one cup. Brethren, I cannot do without you. If I want to celebrate the Lord's death, I cannot go into my chamber and take the piece of bread and the cup, and celebrate the ordinance alone—I must have you with me, I cannot do without you.

And you, the most spiritually-minded of you, if you shut yourselves up in a cell and try to play the monk and the super-excellent, cannot keep this ordinance. You must have fellowship with other believers, you must come down among the saints, for our Savior has given us this memorial which cannot be celebrated except jointly, by the whole of us together.

You Christians must come together to break this bread and to drink of this cup. “This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” Did the Master foresee that we should be so apt to split up into sections? Did He know that we should be so apt to be individualized till we forgot to bear one another's burdens? And did He, therefore, while He made baptism the personal, solitary confession of faith, make this communion to be a united joint memorial in order that we might be compelled to come together—might by sweet constraint be driven to meet in the same place with one accord, or else be unable to make a memorial of His death?

It is a joint memorial. You have thought that over. Well, now, let us try and link hearts together. Are there any differences between us tonight? I am not conscious, my beloved, of any difference with any one of you. If I were, I would seek grace to shake it off. And if you tonight are conscious of anything against any brother or sister with whom you will commune at the table, I pray you now to put it all away before you come hither.

Remember that you must eat and drink jointly with that very friend with whom you are offended now, and therefore make up the offense, and so come together. God has forgiven you so much that you may well forgive your brother this little, supposing him to have offended you. Come, then, together, beloved—together let us keep the feast.

At the same time, I must not forget to remind you that, *while a united memorial, it is most distinctly a personal one*. There can be no Lord's supper, though we all meet, unless every man puts the bread into his mouth and unless each one of us himself drinks the wine. That cannot be done as a joint act. The bread is passed round and there must be a distinct reception on the part of every person here.

So let us not lose ourselves in the crowd. We are drops in one great sea, but still we must remember that we are drops, and as no drop of the sea is without its salt, so let no one among us be without the salting influence of true communion with Jesus.

Dear friend, I cannot commune for you and you cannot commune for me. If you are all happy, I shall be glad, but it will be little benefit to me unless I can see the Savior too, and so will it be with each one of you. Therefore let me pray you to cry unto God to give you now personally to remember the Lord Jesus Christ—His love for you, His death for you, His rising for you. “He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.” Let that thought be uppermost in your mind just now.

Yet further, I must not fail to remind you that, *as a memorial of Christ, while it is very solemn, it is singularly happy*. Christ has ordained, as a memorial of His death, what? Why, a feast. Not a funeral, not a meeting together to sing dirges over His mangled body, or to go to a grave to weep there. That might have been a memorial, but we have a better one—we have a happy one. It is very significant that after supper they sang a hymn. Singing *then*? Oh, yes, singing! Joy becomes a feast and joy is to attend our recollection of the woes of Jesus.

The position which we ought to occupy at the Lord's table suggests also that Christ meant us to be happy. Did He ordain that we should kneel? No, there is not a hint of it. Did He intend us to stand? There is not a syllable about it. How was the Lord's supper originally received? The guests reclined

around the table, leaning their heads in each other's bosoms. It was the easy posture of the ordinary feaster in Oriental nations.

The most proper posture for us, seeing that we could not well lie along, is to sit in the easiest posture conceivable. Choose for yourselves—never mind what people say about reverence. Familiarity with Jesus is the highest reverence. Put your body at the communion table into the easiest possible position in which you can rest and you have then reached Christ's ideal.

It is a feast where you are to be perfectly at ease, in contrast, mark you, with the Passover. There they stood, with their loins girt about, with their hats on, and with their staves in their hands—and they ate like men in haste, who had to go through the wilderness. Now, we have gone through the wilderness. We who have believed have entered into rest—our Passover has been eaten. We fear not the destroying angel—he has passed over us.

We are out of Egypt, we have entered into Canaan, and though the Canaanite is still in the land, we are driving him out. We are not now keeping the Passover with haste, and hurry, and fear, and confusion—it is the Lord's supper of rest, and joy, and peace. For, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is a happy memorial. Joy becomes the face of every one who shall come to the table tonight, or at any other time.

Well now, brethren, if to remember Christ is the objective of the Lord's supper, then you will not have come here to any purpose unless you remember Him. So I pray you to put away every other thought. Have you doctrinal difficulties? Leave them till tomorrow. Have you a sick child, or does business go amiss? Well you will not relieve your cares by violating this sacred hour. Let these burdens be cast on Him who cares for you. One thing you have to do with, it is Jesus Christ crucified—crucified for you, received by you.

Now blot out the other stars and let one star alone shine in the sky—the Star of Bethlehem. Bid farewell to every love but the love of Jesus, and to every fellowship but fellowship with Him. Ask the Lord to take your heart as an arrow and fit it to His bow—and shoot it right up to where Christ is in heaven. "Set your affection on things above."

Many people misquote that, "Set your *affections*." Paul wrote no such thing! "Set your affection"—tie your affections into one bundle and make them *one affection*—and then set it upon things above. Let your whole heart lie in the bosom of the Savior. I pray the Master that we may not one of us hold back—not even you, Mrs. Much-Afraid, nor you, Little-Faith. And you, Ready-to-Halt—may you forget your crutches and may you now remember only Him who is the All-in-all of both the strong and the weak.

*"The strong, the feeble and the weak,
Are one in Jesus now;"*

and let them know it as they sit here and remember Him.

II. The second object of this communion supper is THE SHOWING OF CHRIST'S DEATH "TILL HE COME."

"Till he come." I must not say anything about that except that He will come, and I think that ought to be enough for Christians. To my great sorrow, I had sent to me, this last week, two or three copies of a tract purporting, according to the title page, to have been written by myself, prophesying the coming of the Lord in the year 1866.

Now, you may expect to hear of me being in Bedlam whenever, by my tongue or my pen, I give countenance to such rubbish. The Lord may come in 1866, and I shall be glad to see Him, but I do not believe He will. And one reason why I don't believe He will, I have told you before—it is because all these false two-penny-halfpenny prophets say that He will. If they said He would not, I should begin to think He would, but inasmuch as they are all crying as one man that He will come in 1866, or 1867, I am inclined to think He will not come at any such time.

It seems to me that there are a very great many prophecies which must be fulfilled before the coming of Christ—which will not be fulfilled in the next twelve months. And I prefer, beloved, to stand in the position of a man who knows neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes—always looking for His appearing, but never interfering with those dates and figures, which seem to me to be proper amusement for young ladies who have nothing to do, and who take to them instead of reading novels, and for certain divines who have exhausted their stock of knowledge about sound doctrine, and therefore make up, and gain a little ephemeral popularity by shuffling texts of Scripture as the Norwood gypsies shuffled cards in days gone by.

Leave the *prophets* to divide the *profits* which they get from simpletons—and as for you, watch for Christ's coming, whether it shall be today, or tomorrow, and set no limits, and no dates, and no times. Only work while it is called today. Work so that, when he comes, He may find you, as faithful servants, ready to come in to the wedding with Him. "Till he come," then, the Lord's supper is to be a showing forth of His death.

Let us just notice how we show it forth.

I think *we show it to ourselves*. The Lord's supper may be celebrated without any spectators. It should be in public where it can be, but if there are none to look on, it may be otherwise. In Venice, in Milan, in Paris, and in other cities, where Romanism prevails, five or six of us have met together in our room at our hotel, and we have had the true Lord's supper there, though there were none to look on.

And probably if there had been, in some cities where we have partaken of it, we might have been amenable to the law. 'Tis a showing forth of Christ's death to ourselves. We see the bread broken and see the wine poured out, and we ourselves see here, in symbol, Christ crucified. And we see as before our eyes, when we eat and drink, our interest in the sacrifice offered upon Calvary.

But next, *we show it to God*. We do, in effect, say before the all-witnessing JEHOVAH, "Great God, we break this bread in Your august presence in token that we believe in Your dear Son. And we drink this wine here before You, You Searcher of hearts, solemnly to say to You again, 'We are Yours, bought with Jesu's blood and washed clean in it.'" It is a showing of Christ's death to God.

Moreover, *it is a showing of it to our fellow Christians*. We say to those who sit with us, "Come, brethren and sisters, let us join together. We join with you, do you join with us. We say to you, 'We love Him,' and you say the same to us. Together we clasp hands and renew our Christian fellowship with one another, through renewing our fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. We do, as it were, teach one another, admonish one another, and comfort one another, when we thus show forth the Lord's death.

But besides showing forth Christ's death to ourselves, to our God, and to our fellow Christians, *we also show it to the world*. We do, in effect, say to the world, "Here we show that we believe in Him whom you crucified. He who went without the camp, the Man of Nazareth, despised and rejected of men, is our Master. You may trust in your philosophies—we trust in Him. You may rely upon your own merits, sacrifices, and performances, but as for us, His flesh and His blood are our dependence. As we eat this bread and drink of this cup, Christ Jesus is set forth to you as being All-in-all to us—the bread which sustains our spiritual life and the wine which gives us joy, and sacred exhilaration and delight."

And then, in addition to saying this to the world, *we also say it to sinners*, who may happen to be present, and to whom it may be blessed. How often within these walls has God blessed the breaking of bread to the conversion of souls! Let me refresh the memories of such.

Some of you had been looking on from these galleries—you dared not come down with the people of God, but you did not want to go away. And so you sat and you looked on, and your mouths were watering, not for the bread and wine, but for Christ. You wanted Him and gradually you were like the robins in the cold wintry days. You first, as it were, tapped at the church's windowpane very gently and you were afraid, so you stepped back again.

But all the world was cold and there was not a crumb for you anywhere else. Then you saw the open window of a gracious promise, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" and pressed by

absolute necessity, you came to Jesus. You came into the family circle of Jesus Christ's people and you feasted, and you are glad tonight.

Well, dear friends, as we come together at the table, we will be recollecting any among the onlookers who are not yet brought to Christ. We will think of them and we will breathe this prayer, "Lord, save them! As we show forth Christ, help them to see Him. May they say, 'Yes, His body was broken for sinners, His blood was poured out for sinners, so we will trust Him.'" And if they trust Him, they shall be saved.

Well, now, may we accomplish these two designs—to remember Christ and to show His death. We can only do it by His Spirit. Let us, with bowed head, ask for that Spirit. Let us seek that we may worship Christ in spirit and in truth while we receive the outward symbols of His suffering.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 17 AND 18:1-9

Chapter 17:1. *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son; that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

Christ's great intercessory prayer begins with His appeal to His Father to glorify His Son. Christ knew all that He would have to suffer during that "hour" to which He had looked forward to from eternity, but His eye could see, beyond the cross with all its shame, the crown with all its glory. The Son being glorified, He would also glorify His Father, and there is a wondrous glory that comes to the Father through the death of His Son upon the cross.

2. *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* [See sermon #566, General and Yet Particular]

Some people seem unable to see that there is perfect harmony between the general and the particular aspects of Christ's atonement. As the one Mediator between God and men, He has absolute power over all men, to do with them as He wills, yet that power has a special relation to those whom His Father gave Him before the foundation of the world, and they are those who come to Him in accordance with His declaration, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* [See sermon #2396, Eternal Life]

So that the only way to obtain eternal life is to know God the Father and God the Son—and the best way to know them is to ask God the Holy Spirit to teach us what is revealed concerning them in the Sacred Scriptures which He inspired holy men of old to write.

4-5. *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

As Christ had carried out His Father's will, and done the work He had been sent to do, it was but right that He should go back to the glory which He had for a season voluntarily laid aside. You notice that, although He had not then died upon the cross, He was so certain that He would there complete His great mediatorial work that He spoke of it as being already "finished."

6. *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.*

No one but Christ could or would have borne such a testimony concerning His fickle, feeble followers. Happy will it be for us if He can also say concerning us who profess to be His disciples, "They have kept thy word."

7-8. *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

You see how the truth reached these disciples. The Father gave the words to His Son in His mediatorial capacity, and He gave those words to His disciples, and they received them, and believed that Christ was indeed the Sent One from the Father.

9-10. *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.* [See sermon #2331, Christ's Pastoral Prayer for His People]

See what perfect union there is between the Father and the Son, and note their mutual relationship to the chosen people, "They are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine."

11-12. *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

So it is clear that Judas was not amongst those who were given to Christ by His Father—if He had been, He also would have been "kept."

13. *And now come I to thee;*

Christ looked beyond all that was to happen to Him before He could return to His glory, and as He saw His Father waiting to welcome Him, He cried "And now come I to thee." These might be appropriate words in the mouth of a dying believer, "And now come I to thee."

13-14. *And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Never did anyone more thoroughly mix with men than Christ did—and never had anyone greater sympathy with human beings than He had—yet everyone knows that He never was "of the world." He was distinct from all who were round about Him and He says that His disciples were as He was. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

Christ's people have a life that others have not. They have a relationship to God that others have not. They are swayed by motives which others understand not and they are journeying onward toward a perfection to which others do not even desire to attain. So they are not of the world, and the world treats them as speckled birds, and hates them even as it hated their Lord and Master.

15. *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* [See sermons #47, Christ's Prayer for His People; #2355, Christ's Negative and Positive Prayer and #2703, The Preservation of Christians in the World]

Christ did not pray that there might be monasteries and nunneries where His servants might be shut away from the world, nor even that His followers might die in early youth and go home to heaven. But He prayed that, remaining in the world for gracious purposes—to be its salt and its light—they might themselves be kept from the evil that is in the world.

It would be a dreadful thing indeed if the chosen people of God were to be overcome by the world. So Christ prayed that His Father would keep them from the evil, for He well knew that they could not be kept from it by any power that was not divine. There is no less power needed for the preservation of a believer than for his regeneration. The sustaining of a saint is a constant miracle, which can only be worked by God Himself.

16-17. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* [See sermon #1890, Our Lord's Prayer for His People's Sanctification]

Some men tell us that the truth is in the Word, but that the Word is not the truth. I read, the other day, that we might regard the Bible as a casket which contained the jewel of the truth, but was not itself

the jewel. Christ did not talk in that fashion, for He said to His father, “Thy word is truth.” This shows that God’s Word is not merely the casket of truth, but is the truth itself.

18. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

They are sent ones, even as Christ was *the* Sent One. As He is the Christ, they are *Christians*, anointed with the same anointing as He Himself is, and they should endeavor to be in all respects missionaries to the world, even as Christ was God’s great Missionary to the lost.

19. *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

“I set Myself apart wholly for them, that they also may be set apart for holy uses.”

20. *Neither pray I for these alone,*

“For these who are already saved by My Word,”

20. *But for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

And so His blessed arm encircled not only the converts gathered to Him by His own personal ministry, but also those who should, in after days, be converted under His servants’ ministry. And it always seems to me to have been great condescension on His part to have said, “I pray for them also which shall believe on me through *their* word.” We should have expected that He would have said, “through *my* word,” and indeed, it is His Word that leads sinners to repent and to believe. Yet Christ puts this honor upon those who speak His Word out of the fullness of their hearts. They have by experience made it their own, so He calls it theirs, and gives them this honorable position as the messengers of the Gospel of salvation.

21. *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

I wish that we could see more of this blessed unity, yet it does exist, even if we cannot see it. Wherever there is any true spiritual life—it matters not how much it may be marred by denominational divisions—there is, and there always will be, an essential unity. All Christians are one family in Christ. I do not mean all who call themselves Christians, but all who really are believers in Christ. The inner life is one, the source of that life is one, the nourishment of that life is one, and the end of that life is one, so that all who possess it must be one—one in Christ and one with one another, even as Christ is one with the Father.

22-23. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

That is the real secret of the saints’ unity, “I in them,” together with the everlasting union of Christ Jesus with the Father, “and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;”

23. *And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and have loved them as thou hast loved me.*

[See sermon #1472, The Glory, Unity and Triumph of The Church]

This is a great deep—the words are very simple and clear—but their meaning is unfathomable. Is it really true that the Father has loved His chosen ones as He has loved His only-begotten Son? It is such a wondrous thing that one might be willing to lie awake at night to meditate upon the amazing truth here revealed in our Savior’s words, “Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”

24. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* [See sermons #188, The Redeemer’s Prayer and #1892, Why They Leave Us]

Some foolish folk talk about the saints being put away for a while into some purgatorial “limbo” in order that they may be made ready for heaven, but Christ speaks not so, He says, “I will that they...be with me where I am.” We care not to answer curious questions about the disembodied state—it is enough for us that Christ knows all and that we shall be with Him forever.

What shall be the occupation of those who are with Christ? “That they may behold my glory.” There will be something worth looking at, something to be delighted with forever and ever. “The glory which

thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” So God must have loved His people before the foundation of the world, for He has loved them as He has loved His Son.

There was no beginning and there shall be no end to the Father's love to His people. He says to each one of them, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Here are waters to swim in—plunge into them and revel in the bliss they are meant to convey to all who are in Christ Jesus.

25-26. *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.* [See sermons #1378, The Righteous Father Known and Loved and #1667, “Love and I”—A Mystery]

How rich is this language! How musical! Surely, never did any human poem match this peerless prose of the divine Teacher.

And now, what a descent it is as we pass on to the next scene in His life!

John 18:1-2. *When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.* [See sermon #2767, Jesus in Gethsemane]

He was familiar with the Master's place of retirement for private prayer, and he had, doubtless, heard the Master pray there. Yes, and many a Judas knows the place where the saints meet for worship, and knows the communion table too, and knows some of the most hallowed gatherings of God's people where they pour out their hearts in private prayer. And the pity is that, knowing all that—the ancient Judas and the modern one do not savingly know the Master Himself.

2. *For Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.*

If ever any man might have lived without prayer, it was our Lord Jesus Christ. His humanity was perfect, yet He abounded in prayer. And the nearer we grow to Christian perfection the more shall we pray.

I heard of one who said that she was so perfectly acquiescent in the will of God that she had left off praying, she had got beyond that! What a fearful delusion! God save all of us from ever falling into it! Here is One who could say from His heart, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” He expressed in prayer His perfect acquiescence in His Father's will. Did Christ, our Lord and Master pray so, and will any who profess to be His followers speak so presumptuously as to say that they can live without prayer? God forbid!

3. *Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

What strange paraphernalia they brought with them to the garden of Gethsemane, “lanterns” to show them the way to the Sun of righteousness, “torches” with which to find out the bright and morning Star, and “weapons” with which to overcome the Lamb of God, who had nothing to oppose them but His own innocence.

4. *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?*

It is a wonderfully suggestive thought that Jesus knew everything that would happen to Him. Martyrs and other sufferers for Christ's sake have had some measure of foresight of what they had to endure, but none of them could have so exquisite a foretaste of everything as our blessed Lord had. He knew it all—every single atom of pain, and anguish, and heartbreak. He knew it all, yet He calmly “went forth” to meet it and said to those who came to drag Him away to His death, “Whom seek ye?”

5-6. *They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*

“Jesus said unto them, I am,” as though appropriating to Himself the name of JEHOVAH, and “they went backward, and fell to the ground,” astounded and confounded. Even though He restrained His omnipotence, He claimed the omnipotent name I AM, and before the majesty of that name they prostrated themselves upon the ground.

7-9. *Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.* [See sermons #2368, The Living Care of The Dying Christ and #2616, Christ's Care of His Disciples]

That was a very gracious saying of Christ's, “If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.” This is what Christ says on His people's behalf to death, and to the law, and the justice of God. And though this saying does not excuse the disciples' flight, it does make some sort of apology for their going away every man to his own home. Christ knew that they would be safer there.

One of them followed Him afar off instead of going his way—and you know what came of it. There is a time for openly following Christ, and there is a time when Jesus says, “Let these go their way.” So, right to the end He takes care of His sheep and bids them scatter for a while now that the sword is about to enter their Shepherd's heart.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.